

South Dakota National Guard

Public Affairs Office

Phone: 605-737-6721 Email: ng.sd.sdarnng.list.pao@mail.mil

Web: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil>

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

842nd engineers provide support to community projects

By Pfc. Jennifer Lena
129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BELLE FOURCHE, S.D. – Soldiers of the South Dakota National Guard’s 842nd Engineer Company are managing several infrastructure projects during the 31st Golden Coyote training exercise in the Black Hills June 6–20.

The 842nd, which consists of more than 160 Soldiers from Belle Fourche, Sturgis and Spearfish, are taking advantage of the Golden Coyote training opportunities to build up their Soldier and engineer skills.

This year, the unit is working on installing culverts and cattle guards, building an access road to Orman Dam, improving roads in Custer State Park and hauling timber to various Native American reservations.

“The skills we’ve used here include learning how to use mine detection equipment and how to operate heavy machinery,” said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Carr, a platoon sergeant for the unit.

The engineers use a variety of heavy equipment such as bulldozers, scrapers, backhoes, graders and loaders to accomplish their mission.

“I really like operating the equipment and learning how to use it more effectively,” said Pfc. Larry Benson, a horizontal construction engineer and first time Golden Coyote attendee.

Although this year’s significant amount of rainfall has proved to be a challenge, those in the unit have taken it in stride.

“The training we’ve done here provides experience that you just can’t get at basic or advanced individual training,” said Sgt. John Butt, a heavy equipment operator. “Dealing with the rain is a great training opportunity for new Soldiers.”

The rain and subsequent mud makes the construction sites vulnerable and puts equipment in danger of becoming stuck.

When conditions are too wet to work, the unit is far from idle.

“Soldiers attend classes on basic soldiering skills that are valuable in a deployment setting,” said Butt. “When the site is dry enough again we go back to the site.”

Once the projects are complete, the Soldiers are able to reflect upon their hard work.

“All our projects are for the community,” said Carr. “Everything we are doing is to help the people of South Dakota.”

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High resolution photos are available at www.flickr.com/southdakotationalguard



150610-Z-ZZ999-450: U.S. Army Pfc. Brett Opsal, of the South Dakota National Guard’s 842nd Engineer Company, installs culverts during the Golden Coyote training exercise at the Orman Dam, near Belle Fourche, S.D., June 10, 2015. Golden Coyote gives service members from all over the country and world an opportunity to train on their skills. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Blaine Anderson/Released)



150610-Z-ZZ999-452: Soldiers of the South Dakota National Guard’s 842nd Engineer Company construct a road during the Golden Coyote training exercise at the Orman Dam, near Belle Fourche, S.D., June 10, 2015. Golden Coyote gives service members from all over the country and world an opportunity to train on their skills. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Blaine Anderson/Released)



150610-Z-ZZ999-453: Soldiers of the South Dakota National Guard’s 842nd Engineer Company construct a road during the Golden Coyote training exercise at the Orman Dam, near Belle Fourche, S.D., June 10, 2015. Golden Coyote gives service members from all over the country and world an opportunity to train on their skills. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Blaine Anderson/Released)



150611-A-TH890-065: U.S. Army Pfc. Jay Wetzler, of Spearfish, S.D., assigned to the 842nd Engineer Company, South Dakota National Guard, operates a crane as it loads logs onto a flatbed trailer at West Camp Rapid in Rapid City, S.D., in support of the Golden Coyote training exercise, June 11, 2015. Golden Coyote gives service members from all over the country and world an opportunity to train on their skills. (U.S. Army Reserve photo by Sgt. 1st Class Bronco Suzuki/Released)



150611-A-TH890-119: U.S. Army Pfc. Seth Davis, of Belle Fourche, S.D., assigned to the 842nd Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, directs a crane as it loads logs onto a flatbed trailer at West Camp Rapid in Rapid City, S.D., in support of the Golden Coyote training exercise, June 11, 2015. Golden Coyote gives service members from all over the country and world an opportunity to train on their skills. (U.S. Army Reserve photo by Sgt. 1st Class Bronco Suzuki/Released)

For more information, please contact Maj. Anthony Deiss at (605) 737-6721 or cell (605) 431-8753, or e-mail ng.sd.sdarng.list.pao@mail.mil.